



Australian Government



Jobs and Skills Australia

Vacancy Report

October 2024

Released 13 November 2024

Internet Vacancy Index Key Points

This month's report shows the period of record growth in advertisements following the COVID-19 pandemic is ending. While the previous two months showed an increase in online job advertisements, this month continues the overall decreasing trend since mid-2023. Despite this, vacancy numbers remain at elevated levels, with around 30% more advertisements in the labour market presently than compared with the monthly average for 2019.

- Over the month, online job advertisements at the national level decreased in October 2024 (down by 2.3% or 5,300 job advertisements) to stand at 226,500.
 - Over the year to October 2024, online job advertisements decreased by 13.0% (or 33,900). Vacancy numbers, though, are at high levels historically.
 - This downward trend is present in other demand indicators, with the Australian Bureau of Statistics' [Job Vacancies, Australia](#) series showing a 17.1% decrease in vacancies over the year to August 2024.¹
- Recruitment activity decreased in most states and territories over the month. The strongest decreases were recorded in the Australian Capital Territory (down by 6.7% or 420 job advertisements) followed by Victoria (down by 3.8% or 2,000). There were increases recorded for Tasmania and the Northern Territory.
- Over the month, advertisements decreased across all five Skill Level groups. The strongest decreases were recorded for Skill Level 3 (commensurate with Certificate IV or III) occupations (down by 4.0% or 1,500 job advertisements) followed by Skill Level 5 (commensurate with Certificate I or secondary education) occupations (down by 3.0% or 770).
- Advertisements decreased across seven Major Occupation groups over the month. The strongest decreases were recorded for Community and Personal Service Workers (down by 3.9% or 990 job advertisements) followed by Sales Workers (down by 3.6% or 660). A slight increase was recorded for Machinery Operators and Drivers (up by 0.7% or 90).
- Recruitment activity was concentrated in metropolitan Australia, with 71.6% of job advertisements in October 2024 found in Australia's capital cities. Over the last 12 months, job advertisements have decreased in regional areas (down by 15.7%) and capital cities (down by 15.4%).
- Each month the IVI report provides a more detailed analysis of a particular labour market segment. This month's report spotlights Panelbeaters.

226,500

Seasonally adjusted

▼ **2.3%** Monthly change

▼ **13.0%** Annual change

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¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), '[Job Vacancies, Australia](#)', seasonally adjusted data, August 2024.

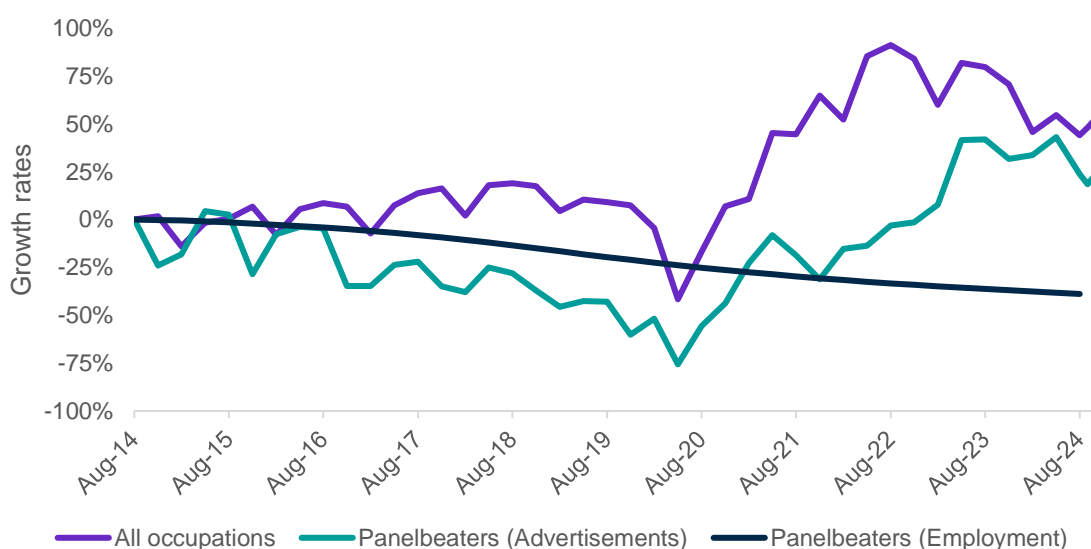
Bumper to Bumper: Growing demand for Panelbeaters amid declining workforce capacity

Australia's automotive sector is moving towards structural shifts arising from the transition to low emission vehicles.² Amid the uncertainty of forthcoming changes, on one hand, segments of the sector have enjoyed robust post-COVID-19 conditions. New car sales achieved record levels during the 2023-24 financial year with signs of easing purchasing intentions, in response to slowing economic conditions, only emerging towards the fourth quarter of 2024.³ On the other hand, some segments have faced escalation of ongoing challenges.

Like other Technicians and Trades Workers occupations, automotive trades have faced acute workforce challenges evidenced in persistent occupational shortages.⁴ The configuration of workforce characteristics and labour market conditions brings particular significance to recent increases in online job advertisements for Panelbeaters. Long-term declines in employment in this occupation do not appear to parallel demand for services, with reports suggesting ever-lengthening wait times for repairs and scarcity driving workers' capacity to leverage higher remuneration.⁵

Prior to the COVID-19 downturn, online job advertisement numbers for Panelbeaters declined steadily across the preceding 15 years covered by the Internet Vacancy Index.⁶ The post-pandemic period has seen a reversal of this trend, with online job advertisements for Panelbeaters maintaining an elevated level more persistently than the all-occupation average. These trends are illustrated in Figure 1. Over the five years to October 2024, online job advertisements for Panelbeaters increased by 177.6% (or 170 job advertisements), compared with 36.2% growth across all Technicians and Trades Workers occupations and 43.0% growth across all occupations.

Figure 1: Growth rates in online job advertisements and trend employment for Panelbeaters, August 2014 to October 2024



Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, Internet Vacancy Index, seasonally adjusted data, October 2024; Jobs and Skills Australia, Labour Force Trending, August 2024.

Despite increasing demand for Panelbeaters, reports of accumulating work backlogs and increasing wages driven by scarcity, workforce levels appear to be on trajectory of contraction rather than stability or expansion.⁷ [Labour Force Trending](#) data for the occupation shows a long-term downward trend in employment numbers (Figure 1).⁸ Vocational Education and Training (VET) data indicate a stark absence of entrants progressing through the training pipeline, even when compared to related automotive trades such as Vehicle Painters.⁹ The older age-profile of this workforce, with 46.3% of workers over 45 years-of-age (compared with 38.6% for all Automotive and Engineering Trades Workers), suggests the potential for a fast-approaching retirement cliff for workforce sufficiency.¹⁰ The physical aspects of role

² Motor Trades Association of Australia, 'Directions in Australia's Automotive Industry', 2021.

³ Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries, 'September 2024 New Vehicle Sales', 2024.

⁴ Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), '2024 OSL Key findings and Insights Report', 2024.

⁵ J Katsaras, 'Wait times for car repairs growing amid mechanic skills crisis, lack of apprentices', ABC News, 23 January 2024; Motor Trades Association of Australia, 'MTAA's response to Jobs and Skills Australia's (JSA) Draft Core Skills Occupation List (CSOL)', May 2024.

⁶ JSA, 'Internet Vacancy Index', 3-month average data, October 2024.

⁷ J Katsaras, 'Wait times for car repairs growing amid mechanic skills crisis, lack of apprentices'; Motor Trades Association of Australia, 'MTAA's response to Jobs and Skills Australia's (JSA) Draft Core Skills Occupation List (CSOL)'.

⁸ JSA, 'Labour Force Trending', August 2024.

⁹ National Centre for Vocational Education Research, 'Apprentice and Training Contract Status [VOCSTATSI]', March 2024.

¹⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Panelbeaters and Automotive and Engineering Trades Workers (OCCP) by Age (AGE5P) 2021' [Census of Population and Housing, TableBuilder], 2021.

demands may preclude the possibility of prolongation of working lives even if experienced workers were desirous of deferring retirement plans.

The workforce challenges facing Panelbeaters could be considered prototypical of many Technicians and Trades Workers occupations. Returning better balance to workforce capacity against demand for services will be aided by enrichment of the pipeline of new workforce entrants from the VET system. The Department of Employment and Workplace Relation's [VET Workforce Blueprint](#); a roadmap to grow, support and sustain the VET workforce, represents a key pathway to fixing skill shortages in the wider Australian economy. Developed in collaboration with states and territories, and informed by Jobs and Skills Australia's [VET workforce study](#), the Blueprint can guide action to ensure the Australian workforce has the skilled individuals it needs.

Internet Vacancy Index Summary Sheet - October 2024

	Number of job ads (no.)	Monthly change (no.)	Monthly change (%)	Annual change (no.)	Annual change (%)
Australia	226,500	-5,300	▼ -2.3%	-33,900	▼ -13.0%
New South Wales	65,700	-1,300	▼ -2.0%	-13,100	▼ -16.7%
Victoria	51,500	-2,000	▼ -3.8%	-12,500	▼ -19.5%
Queensland	54,800	-480	▼ -0.9%	-2,300	▼ -4.0%
South Australia	14,000	-80	▼ -0.5%	-680	▼ -4.6%
Western Australia	28,100	-20	▼ -0.1%	-3,900	▼ -12.2%
Tasmania	3,800	40	▲ 1.1%	-330	▼ -7.9%
Northern Territory	3,300	30	▲ 1.0%	-130	▼ -3.8%
Australian Capital Territory	5,900	-420	▼ -6.7%	-1,500	▼ -20.7%

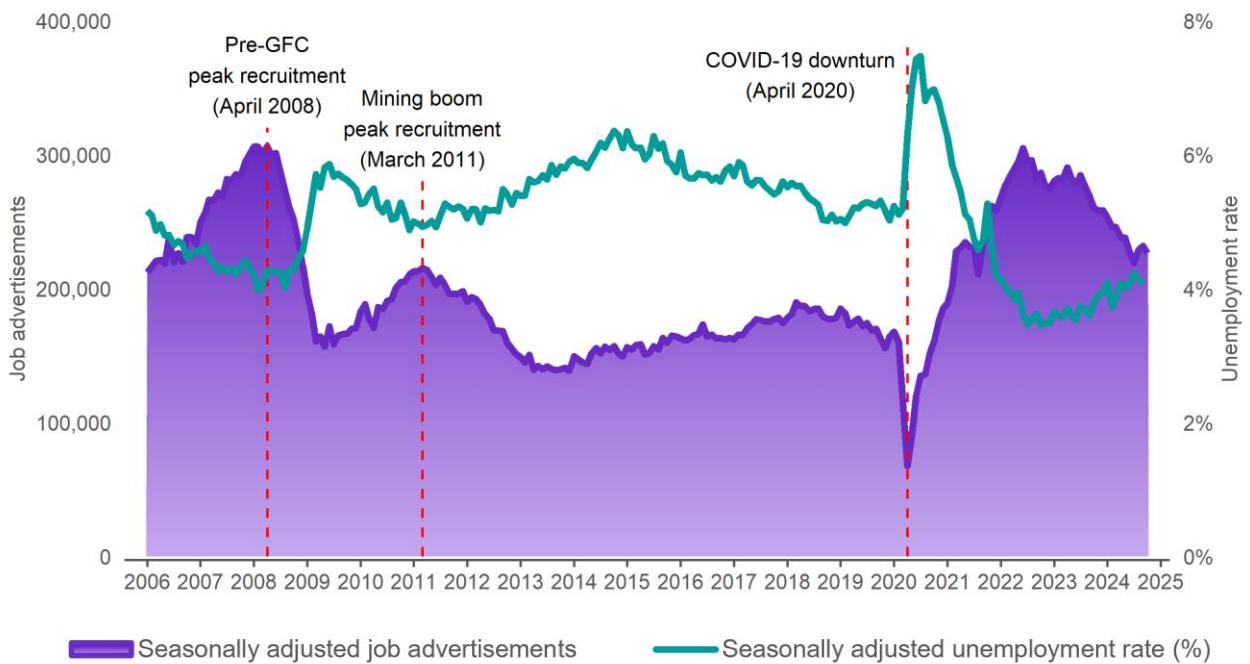
Managers	26,600	-840	▼ -3.1%	-3,700	▼ -12.2%
Professionals	64,400	-750	▼ -1.1%	-15,000	▼ -18.9%
Technicians and Trades Workers	32,600	-860	▼ -2.6%	-3,000	▼ -8.4%
Community and Personal Service Workers	24,400	-990	▼ -3.9%	-3,600	▼ -13.0%
Clerical and Administrative Workers	34,000	-1,000	▼ -2.9%	-5,400	▼ -13.6%
Sales Workers	17,600	-660	▼ -3.6%	-1,500	▼ -8.1%
Machinery Operators and Drivers	12,600	90	▲ 0.7%	-1,100	▼ -8.2%
Labourers	14,500	-320	▼ -2.2%	-730	▼ -4.8%

Skill Level 1 - Bachelor degree or higher	82,300	-1,200	▼ -1.4%	-17,800	▼ -17.8%
Skill Level 2 - Advanced Diploma or Diploma	26,400	-210	▼ -0.8%	-2,000	▼ -7.0%
Skill Level 3 - Certificate IV or III* (Skilled VET)	35,600	-1,500	▼ -4.0%	-3,600	▼ -9.2%
Skill Level 4 - Certificate II or III	57,200	-1,700	▼ -2.9%	-9,400	▼ -14.1%
Skill Level 5 - Certificate I or secondary education	25,100	-770	▼ -3.0%	-1,300	▼ -5.1%

*Includes at least two years of on-the-job training.

Source: Jobs and Skills Australia, Internet Vacancy Index, seasonally adjusted data, October 2024.

Figure 2: Job advertisements and unemployment rate, January 2006 to October 2024



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force, Australia, seasonally adjusted data, September 2024; Jobs and Skills Australia, Internet Vacancy Index, seasonally adjusted data, October 2024.



The next IVI release is scheduled for 11 December 2024. The IVI is published on the JSA website at jobsandskills.gov.au/data/internet-vacancy-index.

The Internet Vacancy Index (IVI) is a monthly data series measuring online job advertisements, compiled by Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA). The IVI counts job advertisements newly lodged on the SEEK, CareerOne and Workforce Australia online job boards. Commencing in 2006, the IVI is the longest continuous time series for vacancy data in Australia. JSA research indicates the proportion of all vacancies covered by IVI has increased from 38% in 2016 to 60% in 2023. More detail on the IVI is available at jobsandskills.gov.au/data/internet-vacancy-index.



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